352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 [251] (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud) holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-

415 rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water

[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-

[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mäs-sob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerära") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "ditta" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "talla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market,can gather leaves of the "qachamo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "tadjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gesho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebun" or "qarbabbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "tadj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, [415] mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for theever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

442 ●415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjära are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

442 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. Ornamentation [531] consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. Wooden combs [303] together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wooden [412] mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On [354] occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and backrest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, [407] consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is [231] made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eja" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large
●415 horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[171]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of däbtära and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324
412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "mäj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Conen, Marcel: Flacon Abyssin en corne...Tr, Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotära" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

● 415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 362 The reed table, "massob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 273 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan tela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained teff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("sabaz", "geramta", "akarma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofeda") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agalgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wanchar")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can
[241] stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
442 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melagh" although very commonly still sold by an Areb trader. The small glass drinking bottle called "berellé", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berchego" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "länd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "qämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [346] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "metad", has already been [354] mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

415 It is used for the last stage in beer making, when the talla and fresh gesho are mixed with water. It was also used in many such annual transactions to avoid arguing and litigation.

A smaller version which is more often used as a water pitcher is the"mänqäl", only 14" high of which 4" are spout, 10" diameter at the widest, 7" bottom diameter, and a spout width of 4". It usually contains 6 - 10 liters of water. The "mänqäl" is also used to store smaller quantities of mead("tej").

For final preparation and short-time storage of barley beer (tälla), on feast occasions rather than for daily use, a huge jar called "gan" is used, with a capacity of about 150 liters. Several men are needed to tilt it so that beer can be poured into the smaller madiga. The shape is more like an amphora, with two side handles and almost round bottom. It can also be used to store grain. For safety's sake, the bottom half may be buried in the soil. In Amhara terms, the average "gan" holds more than 100 "berelle" (glass bottles used as mead cups). The spout may be 9" wide, 6" long. Two "gan" are usually sufficient for the average country feast or "tazkar", unless it continues for more than a full day. A "gan" with a shorter spout is called "masäro". Special straps are used for inclining it, called "maweräja" or "mangächa".

Cooking pots and bowls are usually small. The "wachet", a small variety, is preferred in urban areas. It is about 13" in diameter but only 3" high, with a thickness of 3/4" to 1". It is covered with a straw lid. Rural

415 housewives prefer a much larger variety, "mägäfäl", for the family "wot", or, for small-scale cooking the common "dest", or "mamwashät". This is 4-1/2" high, sometimes with two vertically separated compartments for different foods, e.g. peppery meat stew and vegetables. It is usually the blackest in color of all pots. A similar small pot, "mächit" is used for cooking fish.

The traditional coffeepot, called "kuskus" or "kuskushet" (onomatopoetic), is shaped like a madiga, but less than half its size, and has a short and narrower spout. Another pitcher does resemble a European bowl-coffee pot in shape, with a long, bent, narrow spout. This is the one-handled "manqurqoriya" (onomatopoetic), called "jäbäna" in Shoa and "gämbo" in Cushitic, used to pour barley beer into individual cups, holding at most 15 berelle. This pouring was the special occupation of servants called "gämbonya" in elaborate feudal households, and he did nothing else but carry the "gambo" or barley beer on military expeditions with his master. This special occupation has recently fallen into disuse but is well remembered by the nostalgic.

B. Smithing

326 Of all specialized, manual occupations, smithcraft involves the largest team, five able bodied men who, however, can interchange their roles. A team of five is necessary because of the greater use of musclepower and greater need for cooperation in this occupation. But, apart from the former specialist in weapon-making, the technological

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 [354] [415] [283] More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ənqälba", for carrying the baby on the mother's back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoulders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomada", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jändi", cover

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dabälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in. The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at 804

[264] [262] [415] [262]

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church. 681

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him. 793

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king. 643

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves. 752 757

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 621 361 342 352 415 264 262 252 373 314 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor.

[2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

AG-H quickly ducked behind a bush. He placed the purse in his *gäbäte*, the lengthwise half of a gourd which all travelers carry for mixing their ration of crushed linseed (called *tälba*) with water. He wrapped this in a piece of colorful imported silk that he had bought as a gift for his home church. Flattening the package as much as possible, he placed it on his head in the manner of the Abyssinian priests when they carry the *tabot*, the sacred tablet which is taken from the inner sanctum of the church to a pool of water on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. With his free hand he quickly folded his daytime toga in the manner of one going to church and borrowed the largest cross his companions were carrying. Holding it before him like a weapon, and looking serious, holy, and unafraid, AG-H led the caravan as he climbed up the trail in a slow, dignified manner.

When the bandits drew near, they bowed politely. AG-H stopped and gave them the cross to kiss. They asked respectfully to which saint his *tabot* had been consecrated. He replied with the most common one, *Qeddus Giyorgis* 'St. George.' Then they wanted to know which parish church it was from. By this time the old wit had returned to AG-H, and he answered: *"Yätalba masha Giyorgis"* 'St. George of the linseed-paste.'

The bandits nodded gravely and escorted him all the way up the escarpment, explaining that the area was dangerous and full of organized bandits. Some days later they learned how they had been fooled, and forever after they were on the lookout for AG-H on the banks of the Blue Nile.

Poetic Revenge. AG-H had spoken a candid truth once too often and was in official disgrace with Emperor Menelik. As usual, when miffed, he retired to Gondar.

But this time, having left Addis Ababa unofficially and quickly, his finances were low. Adding to his discomfiture was the news, brought to him by a friend from the capital some months later, that Menelik was amusing himself by telling stories of the misdeeds and follies of AG-H.

An idea of poetic revenge came to him. He instructed his friend to go to the Emperor and report that AG-H had died and that his kinsmen in Gondar were too poor to hold a fitting *täzkar*, a big memorial feast held forty days after death.

Empress Taitu was first to hear of the sudden death of her favorite. She promptly stormed into the chambers of Emperor Menelik, much as she had stormed into the battle of Adua against the Italians shortly before, riding with the troops of her own province. "You murderer," she shouted at the Emperor, "you broke his heart, you banned him from the court." She threw up her hands in misery, wailed as if a close kinsman had died, moving back and forth, chanting aloud about the goodness of the deceased. After a while this began to affect even the iron Menelik. At this point the messenger brought up the rest of his news, the *täzkar* problem. Menelik promptly gave him the huge sum of ten thousand thalers, to assuage his own feelings of guilt and to calm the Empress.

For a while AG-H enjoyed the fruits of his revenge back in Gondar. But he knew that he could not hide forever. Moreover, his generosity to kinsmen, neighbors, and transient monks was such that before long his money was gone.

So one day he reappeared in Addis Ababa. When he first approached the Empress, the stout woman almost fainted. She immediately sent a messenger to the Emperor. Unwilling to believe the news, he sent the messenger back to ask whether the Empress was feeling well. Thereupon, she took AG-H by the hand and stormed into Menelik's chamber. The Emperor was too shocked and surprised to be angry. He managed to inquire, "How is it that the dead arise from the grave?"

With a deep bow, AG-H replied: "Your Majesty, it is not uncommon in our Christian religion to arise from the dead" [alluding to the resurrection of Jesus].

Another version: While in disgrace, and living in Gondar, the newly-rich AG-H neglected his field, wasted his money and, toward the end of the rainy season, his wife and children were starving. So he sent his long-suffering wife to Addis Ababa with the false story of his death and need for *täzkar* money. Explaining his reappearance later, AG-H said, "Your Majesty, I so longed to see the faces of your Majesties again that I was not at peace in the earth and had to return."

A third version: "Your Majesty, they had so many rules and regulations up there [pointing to heaven] that I preferred to return and live under the rules of Your Majesty."

Sex On The Hill. Women are forgetful creatures. Sometimes they don't even remember that they don't wear trousers under their cotton skirts. One day AG-H was climbing up a steep trail in the company of men and women. A connoisseur of female flesh, he kept behind the women

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

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[416]

[pp. 82–173 have not been processed for the files.–Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy ploughing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

*278 824 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 801 804 Both absolute and relative measurements are used. Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elements appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

*278 • 415 Equipment used for processing medicaments is of common domestic origin, sometimes specified unused (e.g., pots for decocting, cloth for straining), sometimes worn (e.g., pitted mortars for grinding). Generally, the containers used cannot be allowed to rest directly upon the ground, but must sit upon stones, whose number and provenience (usually riverine) are likewise specified by the recipe.

*278 In addition to preparations consumed orally, herbalists provide fumitories, inhalents, instillations, gargles, lotions, poultices, and therapeutic amulets.

*278 *757 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*278 terizing actual therapies range along the entire continuum of pharmacological elaboration. Moreover, the position of any real therapy (and its pharmacological combination) on this continuum tends to be fixed. That is to day, once a man has inherited (or, rarely, purchased) a specific therapy, he generally regards its instructions for gathering, processing and applying medicaments as not amenable to further elaboration. In order to understand this tendency, two questions must be addressed: What are the "grammatical rules" by which discrete pharmacological elements are associated within real therapies? and, What inhibits an herbalist from "elaborating" his pharmacologically simple therapies?

In the context of Ambara herbal medicine, three kinds of pharmacological associations can be usefully distinguished. There are, first, those associations which are conventional (that is, the link between specific instructions cannot be further explained), and for which no alternative associations seem probable. For [415] example, mortars, when elaborated in real therapies, are always worn and pitted; cloth through which medicaments are strained is invariably elaborated as unused; therapies stipulating either new mortars or used cloth, in contrast, appear to be lacking. A second category of associations can also be characterized as conventional, but here alternative associations are possible.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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• 415 Thus, prescriptions for gathering herbals with either a Falasha knife or an Arab one, one with a bone handle or another with a wooden handle, appear to be randomly incorporated within the pharmacological instructions of Amhara herbal therapies.

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* 759 The distinction between these two categories of conventional associations, between links which allow no alternatives and those which do, is by no means obvious to Amhara herbalists. To appreciate this distinction, a man must be acquainted with a substantial number of therapies and observe these regularities, for they form no part of the conscious pharmacological "theory" of the herbalist. Because the Amhara herbalist rarely owns more than three or four therapies, and, of these, perhaps only one or two contain any significant pharmacological elaborations, he is unlikely to recognize regularities of association from his own store of therapies. Nor does he receive any gratuitous information from other herbalists. Information regarding medicaments and techniques for gathering, processing, and administering them is professional secret of the owner. It is zealously guarded from public exposure, out of fear that this would dilute the therapy's healing power (although no mechanism can be suggested by which this might occur), and demean the herbalist's professional status through his abrogation of proprietary rights without recompense. Although pharma-